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Smith on Preparedness.



By
SIMEON STRUNSKY
Editorial Staff
New York Evening Post



Author
Through the Out-looking Glass
with Theodore Roosevelt



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I

ONE CITIZEN DOES HIS DUTY

New Year's eve, and well into the next day, Smith sat in his room and thought about preparedness.

The holiday season was different from any he could remember. The shops had bigger crowds than they had a year ago. More people on the train carried brown-paper parcels. People were much more cheerful. They were no longer waiting for Prosperity. They knew that Prosperity was here. Last year they had to force the holiday spirit. Now they were happy without trying.

But not all the time.

There was a shadow upon the holiday making. Smith's neighbor in the train would be talking of the revival of business, bumper crops, overflowing exports, and suddenly he would spy a fat headline across the aisle and remark that we were unprepared. Thereupon all hands would proceed to feel miserable.

Unprepared for what?

Unprepared for everything. Unprepared for the German fleet when it chooses to come over, Unprepared for the British fleet when that comes over. Unprepared for the German and British

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fleets when they come over together. Unprepared for Japan, for the Latin American, the hyphenated American, invasion, the destruction of our coast towns, the slaughter of our wives and children after the terrible manner of Belgium and the more terrible manner of the war-films. Unprepared if the war in Europe goes on and still more unprepared if peace should come suddenly.

Christmas that year was not what it should have been because people were unprepared for trouble.

People were uneasy and perplexed and Smith was one of them. He would cling to a Subway strap with brown-paper parcels all over him and worry about our national defences. He wanted to know his duty.

And then it occurred to him that the best way he could serve his country was to take a night off and think this matter through. The people he met were little help. When they talked preparedness they fell into set phrases. They had scarcely begun before they were suspecting each other of being militarists and pacifists.

That was the trouble, thought Smith. People have been arguing this matter too much with each other. Why not talk it over with one's self? Not on the train or in the restaurant or in the newspapers and magazines, but at home, where one could take all the time he wanted and not be tripped up on a clever debating point by the other fellow. Before he tackled the other man Smith

wanted to establish what the diplomats call an Entente Cordiale with his own soul.

He thought that would be a good way of beginning the new year.

II

IN CASE OF MISUNDERSTANDING

Let me begin by defining my standpoint on preparedness, said Smith.

I am not a militarist. I am certainly not a pacifist. I do not believe in turning the other cheek. I am not in favor of leaving the first cheek unprotected against a blow that is sure to come. If a bigger navy is essential for the safety of the nation, then let us have a bigger navy. If, in addition, we must have a bigger army, let us have a bigger army. If universal military service is necessary for the preservation of this republic we must go in for universal service. If we cannot avoid conscription, then let it be conscription.

You see, said Smith to himself, I am not of those dangerous men who call themselves idealists. My perplexity arises from no conflict between a fixed ideal and the fear of being compelled to abandon it. I certainly do not want to blind myself to facts. If, for instance, it should be shown that preparedness involves the survival of this nation, that is all there is to it. If the war leaves the nations in a position where dog eats dog, then I

prefer that this country shall be the dog that eats and not the dog that is eaten.

I must make one correction. I have said that I am bound to no fixed idea. That is not quite true. I do have an ideal. I want this country to remain, if possible, what people have been trying to make it for the last 140 years—a land of peace, industry, and democracy. That is the thing which sticks in my mind when I talk and think preparedness. I find myself thinking less of what our preparedness will do to Germany, or England, or Japan, and more of what it will do to us.

But even here I am practical. I am willing to forego the ideal of democracy if it is a question of our national existence. If, for our survival as a nation, it is necessary that we become like Germany, then let us be Germany. If we can survive only under a Czar, then let us be like Russia.

But what Smith wanted to see was America surviving as America.

III

LESSONS OF THE WAR

Seventeen months of war in Europe have taught a great many people a great many things. You only realize what a great war it must be when you see how many different lessons it has taught to different people.

It is very odd. General Joffre has not yet learned the lessons of the war, but Mr. Stanwood S. Menken has. Admiral Jellicoe walks the quarter-deck and worries, but that is presumably because he has not consulted Congressman Gardner who knows all about it. Mr. Asquith and the Kaiser are wondering how, after the war, peace can be made permanent. Mr. Roosevelt knows how.

Smith did not try to enumerate all the lessons of the war that have been learned on this side of the Atlantic. But here are a few:

We need 400,000 Continentals (Secretary Garrison).

We need 1,500,000 men (the War Staff).

We need universal military service (Mr. Roosevelt).

The submarine has done away with the Dreadnought (Naval Staff six months ago).

The Dreadnought is queen of the seas (Naval Staff to-day).

We need battle-cruisers (Secretary Daniels).

I am not so sure about battle-cruisers (Admiral Goodrich).

Coast-fortifications are played out (before March 18, 1915).

Look at the Dardanelles! (after March 18, 1915).

We must have Prohibition (Captain Hobson).

We must have suffrage (the Suffragists).

We must have eugenics (the Eugenists).

But Smith found himself wondering whether the war in Europe has really taught us anything or whether it has only frightened us:

Nearly every man I speak to is thinking of the horror of Europe. The thing weighs on our hearts. The millions of dead in the trenches, the ruined cities, women slaughtered and outraged, children starving—we think of these things happening to us and we say it must not be.

But has the war taught us anything new about war? When we are at a loss for words to describe the agony of Europe, we say War is Hell. This is fifty years old and was made in America. Have we ever been in danger of thinking that war is anything but hell? Europe has only confirmed what we have always known to be true—that war is horrible, that in war men become beasts, women suffer, children starve, cities burn.

But the horror in Europe has no bearing on the question whether we are prepared or unprepared to ward off invasion. That is a question which must be answered by the facts on this side of the Atlantic. Our coast artillery would shoot just as well or just as badly if the dead in Europe were only four hundred thousand instead of four million. Our battleships would steam just as fast or as slowly if Louvain had not been burned or Rheims had not been bombarded. A small-sized Hell is not much more attractive than a full-sized Hell.

IV

WHY NATIONS GO TO WAR

He had said that people were shaken by the horror of Europe. Smith felt that was not the whole truth.

A great many people in this country have been appalled by something more than the physical agonies of the war. They feel that they are in the presence of a moral catastrophe. They have discovered that our civilization knows no law but Force. Promises have been broken. Treaties have been violated. The rules of international law have been thrown overboard. A great many people now believe that a nation will go to war whenever it thinks it can get the jump on its enemies, and with no other incentive than the expectation of victory.

To-day we are afraid of peace as well as of war. In war a nation will break treaties, invade, seize, violate. In times of peace it stands ready to begin breaking treaties, invading, confiscating, violating, the moment the chance offers.

If this is true, then we must prepare to the hilt. If any nation will fall upon any other nation regardless of preëxisting treaties, friendship, unbroken centuries of pacific relations, then, of course, every nation must be on its guard against any and every other nation.

Is this true? Do peoples and Governments go into war as light-heartedly as a County Dublin man into Donnybrook Fair? Suppose the German General Staff had decided in 1914 that America was just as easy to conquer as France. Would it have been a toss-up whether the German army should march upon Paris or the German fleet start out for New York?

Smith was not a historian but he recalled something of the forces and causes, the rivalries and hatreds, the wars and revolutions, that have made possible the great war of to-day.

War and rivalry in the Balkans go back to the Turkish conquest of Constantinople nearly five hundred years ago and beyond.

War and rivalry between Russia and her neighbors go back a thousand years to the time when Russia fixed her eyes upon Constantinople when it was yet Byzantium.

War and hatred between Frenchman and German go back to the very foundations of modern Europe. Nearly three hundred years ago, French armies laid waste German lands in the Thirty Years' War. One hundred and twenty years ago Prussian armies set out to destroy the French Revolution. What Napoleon did to Prussia, what Blücher did to Napoleon, 1870-71 and Alsace-Lorraine—Smith knew that much.

Rivalry and fear between England and Germany is not so old, but war between the two has

not come overnight. Men have been expecting war and predicting war since Germany set out to build her navy, twenty-five years ago.

War between Russia and Japan did not come overnight. Ten years before, Russia had joined with Germany and France to rob Japan of the fruits of her victory over China; and she continued to vex Japan.

We went to war with Spain over Cuba. We nearly went to war with Spain over Cuba thirty years before 1898.

Nations do not go to war for trivial purposes and upon slight provocation. They know well enough what a bitter business it is. When they do go in the stakes must be high indeed, the impelling hate must be bitter and lasting. Nations do not grow irritated and jump at each other's throat. They growl, they threaten, they square off, they patch up a truce, they postpone the day of reckoning. Do you recall the crises of only the last twenty years which might have brought war and did not? Fashoda as between England and France; the Kaiser's telegram to Krüger; the Kaiser's journey to Tangier; the Conference of Algeciras; Austria's seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the crisis of 1911; the crisis of 1913?

You might say that war did not come because one or the other nation was unprepared. France was not ready to fight Germany in 1905. The following year Germany was not ready to fight the

present Allies. In 1908 Russia was not ready to fight Germany and Austria. This may be true. But doesn't this show that nations may hate and still hold back? Doesn't it show how high the venom had to mount before the present catastrophe came?

Nations do not fight at the drop of the hat.

V

HYMN OF HATE

Smith grew sad as he thought how thoroughly hated we are. We are to-day the best-hated nation on earth. Mr. Choate has said so. Smaller men have repeated it. Everybody hates us. Therefore we must prepare against everybody.

We haven't a friend in the world. England hates us because we have not come to her aid in fighting the battle of democracy and individual freedom.

France hates us for the same reason. In addition she hates us for not sending enough free ambulances and Red Cross bandages.

Germany hates us because of our munitions.

Belgium and Servia hate us because we have not sent enough money and doctors and nurses.

Consequently England, France, Germany, Belgium, and Servia will attack us the moment they can get the jump on us.

Smith recalled what someone said. War is more

dreadful because of what it does to the hearts and minds of men than for its killings, burnings, and outragings. This is true. See what war has done to the mind of a man like Mr. Choate.

He finds that some Englishmen are irritated because the fighting is fine and we won't come in. It is true that a great many more Englishmen would rather not have us come in, but put that aside. Say that England as a whole is irritated with us. To Mr. Choate irritation is the same thing as hatred, and hatred spells war.

France is vexed at us. To Mr. Choate vexation is the same thing as hatred, and that means war.

Germany is angry with us because of American ammunition. German anger, Mr. Choate thinks, is hatred, and hatred means war.

Belgium, Servia, Austria, Russia, are disgruntled with us. Mr. Choate believes it means war.

Well, thought Smith, I meet a good many men a day who vex me and irritate me and leave me disgruntled. I can think of ever so many people whom I detest. I don't know how many street brawls most people have been in since they left school. I have been in very few. If irritations and detestations always led to conflict, the citizen's daily life would be one glad succession of assault and battery.

If nations fought whenever they are irritated and disgruntled this poor world would never know a week of peace.

Does Mr. Choate really believe that England hates us as she hates Germany? That Germany hates us as she hates France and Russia? That Belgium hates us as she hates the Kaiser? Does he really think that our blockade note meant the same thing to England as the invasion of Belgium? That our refusal to come into the war means the same thing to France as Alsace-Lorraine? That our munitions mean the same thing to Germany as the might of England, and the same thing to Austria as the murder of her imperial heir?

Does Mr. Choate really think that one year of anti-American sentiment means war as surely as the thousand years of wars, invasions, alliances, counter-alliances and festering hatreds, that have brought desolation upon Europe?

Irritation, vexation, multiplication, invasion—does Mr. Choate think it is as simple as all that?

It isn't a question of history, thought Smith. It is a matter of common sanity and common-sense.

VI

INSURANCE AGAINST WAR—THE BENEFICIARY

Smith liked the phrase about insurance against war:

We are all agreed as to who should be the sole beneficiary when we insure against war. Our

country. The only question is how much or how little we include under that name.

How do we go about the business of insurance? By striking a balance between the amount of protection we would like to buy and the premium we can afford to pay.

Sensible men do not go without insurance. Neither do they insure in panic and pay premiums beyond their strength. No man in his senses would deprive his family of food and clothes for the sake of his complete peace of mind. In his last hour it would be rather absurd for him to glance at his pale and rickety brood and sigh, "Anyhow, they are well fixed."

That kind of preparedness I have no use for.

How is it when we speak of our wives and our children? In the last resort we think of a little group of physical beings and their absolute wants. Insurance enough to enable them to keep body and soul together when we are gone is the minimum policy we think of, no matter how large the premium. None of us are pacifists when it comes to that kind of preparedness.

But when we speak of protecting our family we mean something more than bare subsistence for one individual 5 foot 3, one individual 4 foot 6, one individual 3 foot 8. We think of them as beings with souls as well as bodies, with capacities for growth, with appetites for joy and love, with faculties for work, laughter, play, books, aspira-

tions, dreams. This complete life we want to insure for them. This is the higher preparedness we all desire.

It is the same with our country. In the last resort, in the face of invasion, our country would be just our country: this stretch of soil between the Atlantic and the Pacific, between Mexico and Canada, with the people on it, and our outlying possessions with the people in them. To keep that soil inviolate and to safeguard the lives of its inhabitants is the minimum national insurance policy we can think of. No premium can be too high for that.

But our country, in the absence of the peril of war, means much more to us than area and population. They are the skeleton upon which the nerves and muscles and flesh of a nation are stretched. And this living body is made up of all that our history and our feelings have poured into it, our record in the past and our hopes for the future, our functions and capacities, our good qualities and our bad, our aspirations, our dreams.

When we say America we speak, or love to think that we speak, of a land which prefers democracy to caste; self-government to government from above; the business of work and trade to the business of fighting. We think of our country as a land where people are born as individuals instead of being cast from a mould, and where men may rise and fall through their own efforts instead of

remaining fixed to their anchorages by the accident of parentage.

Smith knew that professors and such people are in the habit of sneering at ideals. But you and I, said Smith to himself, know that there are such things. We do not always carry them about with us. We find too often that they interfere with business. But we know that there is a better and a worse in life and if business allowed we would much rather do the better thing than the worse.

After all we do not deliberately sit down and teach our children that the game of life is played with a sandbag and brass knuckles. We teach them other and finer things, hoping that experience will not give us the lie too often. You and I have ideals for our children. Every man has.

It is the same with our country. We know that nations do not get on in life by continuous practice of the Golden Rule. Being human, we want our country to grow, be rich and cut a figure in the world. The ideal would be to have our country do all this and keep its soul clean. Being practical men we do not expect to see this come true, but we do want to see America come as near the ideal as may be.

When we speak of our country we do not think only of America in America. We think also of America among the nations. There, too, we have an ideal. We want this nation, without sacrificing itself, to impress on the world the things we be-

lieve in—self-government, democracy, industry, peace, freedom from racial and religious hatreds. Every great people has done something for civilization. We want to contribute our share.

Naturally we can give only out of what we have. We have no great religions to offer to the world, no great philosophies and arts; but we do have a religion and philosophy of social and political life. We have not produced a Zoroaster or a Mohammed, a Shakespeare or Goethe or Michael Angelo. But we have had Lincoln.

VII

IF NOT WE, THEN WHO WILL?

Smith imagined himself setting out to build, from the foundations up, a land that should be proof against invasion.

The object would be to establish a nation which might take the lead in upholding good-will against hate and peace against war. If the experiment failed, we should have to confess that there is nothing in the peace idea. It will have been tested under the most favorable circumstances.

Here are the architect's specifications as Smith imagined them:

Item: A big country; with room for a great many millions of inhabitants; a temperate climate; great rivers and lakes to facilitate communication; mountains crammed with coal, iron, copper, gold, and

silver; great plains for the raising of food; forests and quarries for the construction of homes and factories and churches. In other words, a self-sustaining country.

Item: a big population; both for the purpose of working the wealth of the land and for the feeling of security that comes from great strength.

Item: a high quality population, so as to increase the original advantage of numbers. For that purpose Smith would pick the boldest, the hardest, the most resourceful spirits of all other countries and transport them to his new land.

Item: a couple of oceans, three thousand miles wide on one side, five thousand miles wide on the other, so as to make that country as secure against invasion as any country can be so made by natural barriers.

Item: a country free from the traditions that afflict the rest of the world; traditions of race hatred; traditions of religious hatred; traditions of military glory; the traditions created by the murderous philosophers and professors who are always writing books to prove that what has always been, always must be.

I have not filled in the details in my architect's drawing, thought Smith, but I have enough to make me wonder which of the nations of to-day comes closest to specifications.

Remember. I am not speaking as an idealist. I am not saying that this country which we have

created is obliged at all hazards to hold up the banner of peace and international good-will. I am a practical man. I am only wondering whether this country would not be in a position to give the peace idea a more thorough trial than any other country. I am only wondering whether this nation ought not to be the last to be frightened into accepting the war ideal. If the experiment fails here, where will it succeed?

But then I don't want to be cocksure. Perhaps after all, America is not big enough, strong enough, sufficiently sure of itself to show the way.

War? Yes, we hate it in America. Peace? Yes, peace is our ideal. But let George do it. Let Wilhelm do it. Let Nicholas do it. Let Poincaré do it. Let the shattered, ravaging, maniac nations of Europe do it. How absurd of them to turn their blood-shot eyes upon us, wondering whether we will show them the way out. We dare not take the chance. We aren't strong enough.

In the present-day panic of the white peoples, thought Smith, we are the only solvent institution. When we go, white civilization is bankrupt.

Would it mean then that the world's hope of peace goes overboard? I do not know. I have spoken hitherto of the world as though it were made up of Europe and America only. But there is Asia. There are still China and India. Who knows? Perhaps the ideals of Jesus may yet be realized by the people of Confucius and Buddha.

VIII

PANIC AND PLUCK

Which of the two nations, the United States and England, would one say is to-day under harder pressure? Or is any man insane who would ask that?

Well, which of the two nations, the United States and England, shows clearer signs of going off its head? Think this over a moment and you will see that it is not England.

Nowadays when I hear someone speak of Anglo-Saxon democracy, Anglo-Saxon freedom, Anglo-Saxon pluck, meaning England and America, I find myself thinking that the old phrases are still true of England but are no longer true of this country.

Look at England. While we are conjuring up wars and invasions, England is facing the real thing. She is fighting for her Empire and the history of a thousand years. She has been through seventeen months of war. She has lost nearly three-quarters of a million men. She has seen war rain down from the skies. She is facing an opponent tougher than Napoleon. She is undergoing the supreme test.

Yet up to the present England has refused to go in for compulsory military service.

Why?

Because up to now, when an Englishman has spoken of his country he has meant a good many

of the things we mean when we speak of our country; and one of these things has been an aversion for conscript armies. It may be a virtue. It may be a prejudice. That does not matter. It is enough that in the England he knows and loves there is no place for armies on the European model.

Before Englishmen will give up this idea which has grown very dear to them, they must be hard put to it. The thing may come, but after seventeen months of war and many defeats and disappointments it is not here. More than once during these seventeen months England was in a tight place. Conscription might have helped her out. It was a risk, going on with the old method of voluntary enlistment. But she thought the risk was worth taking.

Compare England's peril with our own "peril." Compare England's situation to-day with our own fears of what may happen to us ten years from now. Then think what it means that people to-day should be speaking of universal military service as the only hope of American democracy. Through seventeen months of war such as the world has never seen England has held out against the surrender of an old faith. Almost in the flash of an eye, and in times of peace we are asked to abandon the faith that goes back to the origins of our nation.

This is not national defence, thought Smith. This is national panic.

IX

INSURANCE AGAINST WAR—THE RISK

He recalled what he had said about insurance and premiums. He rehearsed it to himself.

I said that no sensible man would leave his wife without food and clothes and put all his wages into insurance policies in order to protect her future.

I can think of no man of sense starving his country in order to protect her future; starving her of her ideals, of her reputation, of her self-confidence, of her rôle in civilization.

Unless the unmistakable necessity is there.

If America must become Russianized or Prussianized in order that she may survive, why then it must be. But the need must be shown.

If we must give up our democratic faith in order to meet danger from without, let it be so. But the danger must be proved.

But, thought Smith, when some one tells me that we must give up this or that in order that we may be *perfectly* secured, in order that the country may be safeguarded *for ever*, he is a fool or worse.

There is no such thing as perfect security. All life is a risk. We take chances in being born. We take chances in leaving the cradle. We take chances when we marry and bring children into the world. Life is a risk which men are glad to endure and for which men are willing to pay the price.

It is only a question of how heavy a risk a normal man ought to carry. •

If, for America, the chances of invasion were twenty-five per cent. within the next ten years then we should be justified in sacrificing a good many ideals and liberties to pay for our protection.

If, for America, the chances of invasion are one per cent. within the next ten years, then "universal military service the hope of democracy" is not preparedness but panic, not prudence but a betrayal of ourselves and treason to America.

It means that we haven't pluck enough to take a man's chance for what we pretend to value in life.

X

A BIT OF MODERN HISTORY

He wondered whether he was growing sentimental.

Here am I calling myself a practical man, addressing a plain citizen like myself, and I keep on talking of ideals, and aspirations and our duties to humanity. It is all very well to speak of what we can do for the ideals of humanity and the suffering nations of Europe. But what sort of appeal is that to the average citizen who can spare mighty little time from considerations of bread and butter to ponder on his duty to people three thousand miles away?

Well, thought Smith, it seems to me that pre-

cisely the great mass of simple people have always shown that they have the ideals. It is the men who have to fight for bread and butter who have not infrequently given up their bread and butter for an idea.

He remembered something about public opinion in England during our Civil War. The English aristocrats were against the North. The commercial classes were hostile. But the English masses?

The workers in the English cotton towns were starving. The Union blockade was the reason. If England had intervened and forced an end to the war when the South was victorious there would have been work and bread for the English factory workers.

Do you want to know how the workers of England suffered? Here is something from the English press of that time:

"The shadow of the American calamity is creeping with a slow but steady advance over the shining wealth of our cotton districts. Little by little the darkness grows. First one town and then another is swallowed up in the gloom of universal pauperism."

"The cotton famine is altogether the saddest thing that has befallen this country for many a year. There have been gloomy times enough before this. But in the worst of our calamities there has seldom been so pitiable a sight as the manufacturing districts present at this moment."

Before the cotton blockade set in there were in the poor-houses of fifteen English cotton towns, 56,085 paupers. A year later there were 249,842 paupers. That is how Englishmen suffered.

And what did the English masses do when their rulers seemed bent on taking sides with the South? They held public meetings and protested against "any apparent complicity with the Southern States in the clandestine equipment of warships." They adopted such a resolution in Manchester where the number of paupers had risen from 5,974 to 41,692 in a single year.

English workers were starving, but they met in their trade unions and John Bright spoke for them:

"Impartial history will tell that, when many of your rich men were corrupt, when your press was mainly written to betray, the fate of a continent and its vast population being in peril, you clung to freedom with an unfaltering trust that God in His infinite mercy will yet make it the heritage of *all* His children."

That is the way men in the factories weighed their bread and butter against the working out of a great idea three thousand miles away.

On the whole, thought Smith, it is safe to speak of ideals and service to humanity, when addressing plain Americans.

XI

IF GERMANY WINS

He lit another cigar and went on:

I am afraid I have been indulging in rhetoric. I find myself viewing with alarm and pointing the finger of scorn. Whereas the thing I really want to do is to get at the real meaning of preparedness.

I know by this time how the problem presents itself to me. It is a practical problem. It consists in balancing the chances of invasion against the price we must pay for protection. I have been thinking of invasion the way most of us speak, Invasion with a capital I, from anywhere, from everywhere. Let us get a little closer to the subject.

If Germany wins—

That, thought Smith, is one great fear that possesses people when they speak of national defence. They say Invasion, but they mean Germany—or Japan. Is it mere coincidence that so many men who are hot for preparedness, are heart and soul for the Allies? Mr. Roosevelt's pleas for national defence seldom omit mentioning our criminal indifference with regard to the violation of Belgium. Men like Choate, Pinchot, any number of others I might mention, believe that we ought now to be fighting on the side of the Allies. They believe that we are now playing a rôle of cowardly neutrality because our navy is inadequate and our

army is virtually *nil*. If our navy were twice as big, if our army had half a million men, we should not be playing the coward to-day.

And I imagine they are not altogether in the wrong. With a big army and a very big navy the human temptation to jump in might have been irresistible. Preparedness would have meant that we were prepared to jump into the European free-fight—and on the side of England.

This begins to sound very much like pro-German argument. So let me explain how I feel about the present war, thought Smith.

I want to see the Allies win. I want to see Germany beaten; not crushed as people used to say a year ago. I don't think it possible and I don't think it desirable for the good of the world. But I do want to see Belgium cleared, Servia restored, Germany getting no increase of territory in the east, and as much of Alsace-Lorraine handed back to the French as they ought to have by claim of nationality and the will of the people in the conquered provinces. I believe it would be a calamity for the world if Germany's war philosophy and the spirit that animates her ruling classes and her professors should triumph.

These being my sympathies in the present conflict, what if Germany should win?

Well, if Germany had won in a rush, if Paris had been taken, if the British fleet were shattered, I should be in favor of preparedness much more

drastic than what Mr. Wilson has advocated. But Germany has scored no such victory and expects no such victory. The most she hopes for is a balancing of accounts with something on the credit side of her ledger. Will that kind of victorious Germany invade us? Will she leap on us as soon as she is out of her present mess, without preliminary friction, without giving us time to arm?

That I cannot conceive. I think of the million dead which Germany will have harvested before the war is over and she has her "victory." I think of another million crippled and incapacitated. I think of her economic exhaustion, her hamstrung industries, her vanished foreign trade, her enormous debts, and I cannot imagine Germany setting out with light heart upon the invasion of America.

I think of the millions in Germany among whom even to-day the longing for peace is finding utterance. I think of the masses who are crying out against annexation of conquered territory in horror at the thought of perpetuated blood-feuds. I think of the men in Germany who want reconciliation with the hereditary enemy, with France, with Russia, with England, and I cannot imagine Germany turning upon us.

I think of Germany declaring war upon us and forcing upon millions of our "German-Americans" a bitterer choice than they have yet had to face. To-day they feel they have the right to take sides in a war between two foreign nations, of whom one

is the home of their ancestors. They could not and would not take sides with Germany against the United States. That is a fact which the Kaiser must reckon with.

I try to think of Germany so enamored of a potato diet, so crazy about milkless nurseries as to turn against us; and the thing is inconceivable to me.

XII

IF ENGLAND WINS

I said about our best-known advocates of preparedness that they want England to win the present war. They are not afraid of England.

Still, there are others. To them the danger of England's victory in the present war arises not from England. It looms on the other side of the world—Japan. People may admit that the prospect of America and England at war is inconceivable. But short of that, they will tell you, that England, with an eye to capturing the trade of the world would not be averse to seeing us at grips with Japan, and neutral England selling her goods like anything.

It is a point worth considering. I believe firmly that if we ever have to think of invasion, it is to the Pacific we must look. And for a very simple reason. As against Europe I do not consider that we are open to invasion. Neither can I imagine a hostile army landing in San Francisco. But as

against Japan our coastline is not in California. It is in the Philippines.

Here again I am severely practical. I might say that the Philippines are not worth fighting for. But, human nature being what it is, I recognize that if the Japanese land at Manila, the Philippines will become very much worth fighting for. If the Japanese take the Philippines without provocation on our part, I should want to fight myself.

Suppose, then, the thing has happened, and a Japanese army is in Luzon and Mindanao. What should we do?

To me the problem is not complicated. To keep the Philippines, the Japanese navy must hold the sea. Very well, then. We will go out and smash the Japanese fleet. As a matter of fact, and in spite of what Congressman Gardner has told us, we are strong enough to do that now. But assume we are not. Then we can become strong enough in two years. We can outbuild Japan and take the Pacific from her. Having done that the rest is simple. We can raise and train an army of half a million men and ship them over to the Philippines and take care of the Japanese army.

I know what people will say. If we are going to have a big navy and a big army to retrieve the Philippines, why wait for the Japanese to strike? Why not have the army now and insure ourselves against Japan's misbehaving?

The answer brings me back to the question of probability which is to me the very heart of the problem. I think the chances of Japan's attacking us in the Philippines are, say, one in twenty. The risk, that is, is five per cent. And I consider a big army too high a premium. I am not thinking of the money cost. I am thinking of the cost in sacrificed national ideals, in the befooling of our whole past. If we arm now we tell Japan that we expect her to play the thief. If we remain quiet we say that we think the chances are ninety-five per cent. that Japan will not play the thief. If any man thought me ninety-five per cent. respectable I should be quite content.

I know, of course, what would happen in this country if the one chance in twenty should come to pass and Japan should seize the islands. While we are increasing our fleet, while we are training our half-million men, we will chafe. We will resent the inglorious position into which we have been forced. We will say, "See, that is what happens when you are not prepared."

But I think the five per cent. chance of being humiliated for a period of two years is outweighed by the desirability of having America remain a democratic country.

I won't even mention the chance that if we have a navy twice the size of Japan's and an army of half a million men, we shall discover one fine day that the best way of keeping the Japanese out of

Manila is by landing an American army in Yokohama. Schemes for national defence have a way of turning out like that.

XIII

IF IT IS A DRAW

I say if it is a draw. But is there much doubt in any man's mind about that "if"?

Victory of the kind that makes a people forget its sufferings and sacrifices is in sight for no one in the present war. We cannot foresee a triumphant Germany with her foot on the neck of England, menacing the world. We cannot foresee a triumphant England with her foot on the neck of Germany, her eyes turning upon us as the only rival to her interests and her prestige. Concede that one side or the other will emerge with a shred of conquered territory, with the fragment of an indemnity, what will this Europe look like after the war?

It will be a Continent waking from a debauch of evil passions with a vast moral headache. It will be a Continent sick of slaughter, sick of hate and fears, bled white of its economic strength, pitifully weak and thoroughly ashamed.

I am not dealing with fancies. The thing is there now. The nations are sick of killing and being killed, of starving and blockading, of marching and rotting in the trenches. I do not want to

exaggerate. I do not mean to say that England or Germany is sick of the war to the point of crying quits; though even that is not unlikely. They are in the grip of war and they have set their teeth and are determined to see it through. Because they see no way out. But men in England and Germany are looking for a way out. And in the meanwhile they are asking themselves, Why?

It is the first instinct of man reasserting itself. When they are sane, men would rather create than kill, build than burn, plough than lay waste. When peace comes, when the fire is out, men will go to work to rebuild the civilization of Europe.

But they will do more than that. They will go on asking themselves why this thing had to be. They will look for some way to prevent its happening again. They may fail. The next war will prove that. But they will try nevertheless. In this work of rebuilding the civilization of white men, should America help or hinder?

I am not dealing in fancies. The desire for a guarantee against another conflagration is to-day speaking out in every country. In Germany the Socialists were swept off their feet by the upheaval of international passions. They are beginning to find their bearings. They are talking, not only in Germany, but all over Europe, of the revival of international Socialism. They may fail; but they will try.

In England men are searching for a defence against secret diplomacy.

In Russia, after the war, we may see one of the world's greatest battles for democracy.

All over Europe the nations will engage in a struggle, silent or violent, against the forces which have brought about the calamity of to-day. They will protest against secret diplomacy, against the war-making power of the ruling classes, against the spirit of militarism, against the tradition of national hatreds and fears which the war-makers utilize for their own purposes.

Will democracy succeed in Europe? I don't know. It may be the other way about. The elements that stand for national hate may turn the results of the war to their own purposes. The heritage of the war may be, not reconciliation, but a fiercer hatred. The militarists may drive home their argument that the lessons of the war justify more militarism. The enemies of democratic control in England may persuade the nation that Germany fought as well as she did because she was not bothered with democracy. In Russia the revolution may fail.

But this much is certain. The forces of reaction may win out but they will know that they have been in a fight. The forces of democracy may turn out to be in the minority but the minority will have spoken.

In the course of that battle, the men who fight

for a freer and safer Europe will turn their eyes across the Atlantic. I wonder which it would help them to see: America holding out against international hates, armaments, secret diplomacies, or America tossing democracy into the discard.

Of course, if we dare not take the chance, that is all there is to it. If European democracy goes down to ruin because we dare not cheer it on, we are still in a perfectly correct position to say, as Macbeth did to Banquo's ghost:

Thou can'st not say, I did it; never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

I wonder.

XIV

A BIT OF ANCIENT HISTORY

Smith, without knowing why, got to thinking of the fall of the Roman republic. Almost any man you meet can give you a reason why Rome fell, about 2,000 years ago. The number of complications makes the case unique in medical history.

The poor old Roman republic fell because it annexed too much territory; because it lost its military spirit; because land ownership passed into the hands of a few people; because the Romans adopted foreign customs; because they went in for circuses; because the women went in for tight lacing; because the Romans didn't pay attention to eugenics; because of anything you can think of.

And then Smith stumbled upon a secret.

The Roman republic never fell; that is, to its own knowledge. It just weakened, lost its grip, and tapered off into imperialism; but so quietly that for many years after it was dead the Roman republic was under the impression that it was still alive.

If you think of Rome as waking up one fine day and discovering that its liberties were all gone, you are wrong. What happened was this. Rome would wake up in the morning and perhaps miss something, but such a trifle that one couldn't really tell whether it had been there the night before. Next day something else would be gone; rather a nuisance this time, but still nothing to worry over. And then one morning the Roman republic woke up and found Caius Julius Cæsar Imperator sitting at the foot of the bed.

Even then it wasn't such a dreadful change when one thought it over. There were no sudden departures in the forms of the Roman republic. The forms persisted though the spirit sickened and died. Cæsar was at first Consul just as there had been consuls for half a thousand years before him. Then he became dictator, but there had been dictators before. Then he was Imperator, which means general, just as there had been generals before. Long after the Empire, as we call it now, was established the forms persisted. The emperor was only the head of the State and went through some

form of election. The popular assemblies retained some semblance of power. Laws were enacted by the Senate and the Roman People. When Rome finally knew herself as an Empire, she was only recognizing a change of form compelled by a change of spirit that had long ago taken place.

People who live in a period of great change seldom think of themselves as breaking violently with the past. It is only the scholars who come long after who point out that here or there the liberties of a people "fell."

Will it be left for the history writers of a hundred years from now to point out that from the year 1915 dates the fall of American democracy?

Absurd? Let us hope so. We, of to-day, feel that there is nothing essentially new in this business of preparedness. We already have a navy and we only add a five-year programme. We have an army and we are only quadrupling it. The changes will come as the result of popular will and constitutional procedure. Congress will vote, the President will sign, and everything will be as before.

And yet, Smith thought, how swiftly a people can drift from its moorings. Secretary Garrison wants 400,000 Continentals. The War Staff want one and a half-million men. Senator Chamberlain wants conscription. This is doing well for less than a year of preparedness.

Mr. Roosevelt doesn't ask for conscription. All he wants is universal military service. Not a standing army like that of Germany or France; that would be un-American. All he wants is an American standing army. European militarism is a menace to democracy. But Mr. Roosevelt loves democracy. So he asks only for universal military service. We can keep our old names and titles and badges. Mr. Roosevelt is perfectly willing, provided we give him the men and the guns.

Let us be calm then. Whatever happens, we can go on calling ourselves a democracy.

XV

EXPENSE ITEMS

Smith recalled that the man who now says that universal service is the only hope of democracy, on former occasions felt just as strongly that there were other things which were the hope of democracy.

Smith recalled that some fifteen years ago this nation experienced a great awakening. Mr. Roosevelt had his share in it. We rubbed our eyes, looked about, found that things with us were not as they should be, and resolutely set to work at the task of making this a cleaner, freer, juster country. The Social Consciousness was born. We entered upon a period of great reforms.

We began cleaning house in municipal politics.

We tried to wrench the grasp of big Business from our national politics.

We got the popular election of Senators.

We put through the Income Tax.

We began Conservation.

We tackled the Trusts.

We began a wholesale onslaught on social misery. We began to clean our city slums and build cleaner tenements, playgrounds, recreation centres, schools. We attacked tuberculosis, hookworm, pellagra, trachoma, cancer, and lead-poisoning in the factories.

We set to work to eradicate child-labor in the factories. We began to protect our women in the factories and from that went on to the protection of men in the factories.

We passed workmen's compensation laws, minimum wage laws, widows' pensions.

We opened the door to women voters. Smith wondered if the women knew that they were fighting for a full partnership in a democracy whose only hope is universal military service.

These are some of the tasks which the American people set for themselves in order to establish social justice, to make this country a better place for their children to live in.

What is to become of all this, thought Smith. We haven't the money because we need most of it for universal military service. But what is far worse, we haven't the inclination now that we have discovered that social justice is an illusion and that

the only hope of democracy is in universal military service.

XVI

OUR NAVY SELTS AWAY

Smith thought of a deadly rejoinder to his entire argument. He had been reasoning that for us war is no more probable now than it was, say, three years ago and that consequently there is no need that we should be better prepared than we were three years ago. But suppose we were not prepared three years ago?

That is precisely the contention frequently made in behalf of preparedness. We need not be frightened by the war, but we should be fools if the war did not induce us to find out just where we do stand in the matter of national defences. Put aside the question of a very large army and a bigger navy with all the change it involves in our policies and traditions. The fact is, says Congressman Gardner, we haven't the navy and the coast defences provided for under our old policies and traditions.

Especially the navy. Concerning the army we have never had any great illusions. We have always thought of it as sort of glorified police force. To say that our army would stand little chance against the military forces of any other first-class Power is to say nothing new. But it is different

with the navy. We have always thought that our fleet ought to, and does, rank very high among the nations of the world. Now we are told that our navy is not second or third but fifth, that it comes after, and not before, the Japanese and French fleets.

It is worse than that. Our ships are undermanned, our guns are outranged, our submarines float when they ought to sink and sink when they ought to float. We are short of ammunition. Our gunners cannot shoot.

If this is so, then there is nothing more to be said. We must prepare. But how shall we prepare? By taking these statements of Congressman Gardner's at their face value or by trying to find out first whether they are so?

Well, thought Smith, there is a thing called common-sense. And my common-sense rejects this picture of a pasteboard navy and coast fortifications drawn for us by Augustus P. Gardner and his disciples. If you tell me that all at once our ships have lost the capacity to sail, our officers have forgotten how to navigate, our men have forgotten how to shoot, our coast artillery has gone to sleep, that American ingenuity, initiative, pluck, have vanished overnight, and that our defences are an empty shell, then I simply refuse to believe it.

But you need not take my opinion in the matter. If you must have experts there are the experts. The commander of our Atlantic fleet has said that

our navy to-day can hold its own against any fleet except Great Britain's.

Isn't this a statement which goes to the very heart of the question? It rejects bluntly the picture of a cardboard fleet sketched by Mr. Gardner and filled in by his disciples. Their familiar assumption, tacit or expressed, is that in case of war with any of the great powers our fleet will be annihilated and America will lie open to invasion. But here is Admiral Fletcher to say that the French fleet cannot annihilate us, that Japan cannot, and that Germany cannot. Should Admiral Fletcher's views be given some weight against Mr. Gardner's and Mr. Menken's? Isn't it our first duty to find out who is right, Admiral Fletcher or Mr. Menken?

"Admiral Dewey Says Coast is Open to Hostile Force." So the *Sun* blazes it on the front page. What Admiral Dewey said in his admirably clear letter is this: *If* our navy is destroyed our coast fortifications are no guarantee against the landing of a hostile force. Consequently adequate naval defence demands "a navy strong enough to meet on equal terms the navy of the strongest possible adversary."

No one denies that. Admiral Fletcher, when he says that our fleet is second to Great Britain's, asserts that we have adequacy. Mr. Gardner and Mr. Menken say no. Is it too much to ask that Congress should find out?

XVII

COAST DEFENCE

After our fleet is destroyed our coasts lie open. The president of the National Security League has said: "You know what our coast defences are. They may be good where they are, but anybody can land and walk around them."

But Mr. Garrison has said of our coast defences: "Yes, sir, they certainly are adequate for the purpose for which they were intended."

Congressman Gardner says that the enemy's battleships can lie out of range of our forts and knock them about our ears. But the Chief of Coast Artillery has said:

"All that has ever been claimed in the way of coast fortifications being able to successfully resist the attacks of warships has been and is being demonstrated—No fortifications in the world compare favorably with our own."

And our Chief of Ordnance has said: "They [our fortifications] are of such power that naval officers would not put their ships up against them."

Oh, well, keep your coast fortifications, says Mr. Gardner. All I ask is that our fleet be wiped out in the first clash of war. The enemy will then land where he pleases and in six weeks there will be 827,000 invaders on our soil.

Do you want proof for the statement that 827,-

000 Germans or Japanese can land on our shores within six weeks? Here it is:

In 1898 it took us eleven days to transfer 16,000 men from Tampa to Santiago. In 1905 it took General Oku's army of four divisions, seven weeks to concentrate in Japan and land in Liao-tung peninsula 600 miles away. It took England nearly two weeks to ship 70,000 men of her standing army across the Channel. It took England and France nearly three months to throw less than 100,000 men into Salonica from Egypt and Marseilles. In every instance the shipping power had command of the sea.

Consequently a foreign Power can land 827,000 men on our shores in six weeks.

I am not trying to work out the strategy of the invasion of America. I am only trying to picture the state of mind in which we have tackled the problem.

XVIII

IN A FOG

Is it too much to ask that Congress shall take steps to lay before the country the facts upon which we are asked to build preparedness? At present the case is being tried in the newspapers and magazines, by everybody who can write down columns of figures. It is not even necessary to add them up correctly. Where we have expert

testimony it is fragmentary, incidental, or lost amidst the vast outpouring of talk for and against preparedness. The people on either side who do know the facts have not been confronted with each other. I mean in the sense of being brought before the same tribunal of investigation which can balance contradictory data and give us a reasoned, complete report.

We need to know whether our fleet is fifth among the nations or second.

We need to know the whole truth about our coast defences.

It is said that 90 per cent. of the people of this country are in favor of adequate national defence. Smith thought it should be 99 per cent.

But what is adequate defence? Suppose it is established that our fleet to-day is adequate against any other fleet but Great Britain's as Admiral Fletcher believes. What then becomes of our fears concerning our exposed coast and our ineffective little army?

That was what Smith could not put out of his mind. Do we know in the first place why we are being asked to prepare? Do we realize in the second place what we are being asked to give up? We are in a haze about both questions.

Here is an instance of the fog in which we are all working. When Mr. Gardner said that our coast guns had only sufficient ammunition for half an hour, Smith was astounded. He thought that

our coast guns ought to have, say, three months' ammunition at the very least. Had not the Allied fleets been banging away at the Dardanelles for nearly nine months?

Well, General Weaver admitted that our coast artillery hasn't as many shells as it ought to have. The ideal amount would be a *two hours'* supply. Of course, when you ought to have ammunition for two hours, ammunition for half an hour is rather bad. But Smith had been comparing half an hour with nine months. How was it with others?

That is the state of knowledge in which the country is tackling preparedness.

XIX

PANIC AND PREPAREDNESS

I am back again where I started, thought Smith.

I tried to make my standpoint clear at the beginning. If it is true that universal military service or an approach to it is the only hope of democracy then I am for universal military service. I go even further. If preparedness is necessary for the nation, I take preparedness even if it destroys our democracy, provided it saves the nation. There are times when a people for its self-preservation must abandon its liberties. After the crisis is over we may start climbing back to our liberties.

If we fail it is a tragedy but it cannot be helped.
The nation must be preserved.

Does the need exist?

I believe in national defence, thought Smith. I am only hesitating before a scheme of defence whose necessity has not been established and for which we must sacrifice most of the things in our national life we have always thought worth defending. I find myself at one with the men in England who believe that in order to defeat Prussianism it would be a bitter price to Prussianize the English nation. If it must be, it should be done—but not till it must be.

We, whose “danger” is as child’s play compared with that confronting the British people, our partners in Anglo-Saxon democracy, are being asked to turn the national life into new channels, give up democracy, give up the privilege and the opportunity to do our share for civilization, shut up shop, go into moral receivership. That is, indeed, one way of saving a nation.

All over Europe men are freely giving their lives for their country. But the country they are dying for, thought Smith, is a country that shall be worth living for. How is it with us?

THE END

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